

the Legislative Council would have been not only advantageous, but highly expedient, and that rebellion was the result of such a course not having been adopted. With regard to the mode in which the Natives may be allowed to have a voice in the Legislature, I have written elsewhere. Those who object to my views may reply to them separately.

This defect in our Government may be said to have exercised a baneful influence over the whole of India, and how many soever may have been the causes of the rebellion,—all resulting from this one circumstance,—a little attentive consideration will show that they immediately originated in the following :

*1st.*—Misunderstanding on the part of the people, or understanding the measures of Government contrary to their real intent and purpose.

*2nd.*—The promulgation of such laws and regulations and rules of procedure as were not adapted to a Government like that of India, and which were opposed to the customs of the Natives, or injurious to their interests.

*3rd.*—Ignorance of Government of the real condition, and the habits and customs of its subjects, as well as the evils which they were exposed to, and which alienated their affections from it.

*4th.*—Neglect on the part of Government of those measures to which its attention in the administration of the affairs of India was necessary.

*5th.*—The mismanagement of the army.

I now proceed to examine separately these five principal causes, and every subject connected with each of them.

*Cause 1st.*—Misunderstanding on the part of the people, or understanding the measures of Government contrary to their real intent and purpose.

From what I may have to explain on this head, I must not be understood to assert that the Government was really such as it was represented to be. I mean that the people misunderstood it, and from this circumstance the rebellion resulted, while had there been Native members in the Legislative Council, such misunderstanding could not have taken place.

There is no doubt that all persons, whether intelligent or ignorant, respectable or otherwise, believed that the Government was really and sincerely desirous of interfering with the religion, and customs of the people, converting them all whether Hindus or Mohammadans to Christianity, and forcing them to adopt European manners and habits. This was perhaps the most important of all the causes of the rebellion. People knew that the orders of Government took effect gradually and by degrees, and that whatever had been determined upon was done slowly. The Government, they thought, did not therefore profess like the Mohammadans to force the people, all at once, to discard their religion, but availed itself of every opportunity to obtain its ends ; and certain measures which gradually came to be adopted, and which will be mentioned hereafter, tended greatly to strengthen these erroneous notions. All had felt convinced that Government would not openly compel any body to change his religion ; but that just in the same manner as it had abolished the study of the Arabic and Sanskrit languages, and impoverished the country, it would devise secret means for converting the people, by keeping them ignorant of their religion and its inculcations, teaching them its own religion, and disseminating religious books and tracts ; at the same time holding out the enticement of employment and preferment. During the general famine of 1837, numbers of orphans were converted to Christianity ; and this fact was considered

Mention of the Sekandra Orphan Asylum.

throughout the North-Western Provinces, convincing proof of the intention of Government to reduce the country to poverty, and thus make its people Christians. I speak only truth when I state that the Natives of India were greatly distressed and mortified whenever any new territory was conquered and acquired by the Hon'ble East India Company. I speak also truth when I say that this state of things had its origin in nothing else but a conviction that in proportion to the increase in the strength and power of the Government, and to the diminution of the number and resources of its enemies, would be its interference in the religion of the people.

At the commencement of British rule in this country religious discussions were very rare.

Religious discussions carried to a great height during the present time.

These, however, increased every day till at this moment they have passed all bounds. That Government was in no way concerned in them is true, but there is no doubt that the people thought otherwise. They believed that all this took place by its orders and suggestions: they also believed that the Missionaries were appointed and paid by the State; and that the Government no less than its European public servants assisted them with

The Covenanted Officers assumed Missionary functions.

money for circulating religious tracts, and in various other ways. Many Covenanted Civil Servants and Military Officers moreover used to hold religious discussions with their Native subordinates, while some of the former even went so far as to direct the latter to attend the preachings of the Missionaries at their residences. In short affairs had taken such a turn that the people thought that neither they, nor their posterity, would be able to preserve their religion under the British Government.

The Missionaries too had introduced a new mode of preaching the Gospel. Religious tracts containing questions and answers now began to be printed, and distributed to the people. In these publications reference to pious men of other religions was made in a highly offensive

style. It is the custom all over India, both among Mohammedans and Hindus, to preach sermons either at places dedicated to the purpose, or at their homes, where any body who likes may go and listen to them. The Missionaries, however, were in the habit of resorting to quite a different practice. Of their own accord they used to frequent Mohammedan mosques and Hindu temples, as well as fairs, for the purpose of preaching, to which no one dared object for fear of the authorities. In certain districts moreover they were even allowed a Chaprasi or Policeman from the *thannah* (Police Office) to attend them. These persons did not content themselves with merely preaching the Gospel, but used to allude to the pious men and sacred places of other religions in a highly disrespectful manner, which gave much offence and pain to their hearers, and served to sow in the hearts of the people the seeds of disaffection to the Government.

Numerous Missionary Schools were established, in which religious instruction was imparted.

The establishment of Missionary Schools. Covenanted Officers attending examinations at them.

People used to say that these institutions were supported by the State. In certain districts, officers of high rank frequented these schools, and exhorted the people to get admitted into them. The pupils had to pass examinations in religious works, and boys of tender age were asked "Who is your God? And who your *Saviour*?" The answers of course were given in accordance with the doctrines of Christianity, and the boys received prizes for them. All this, had the effect of alienating the affections of the people from the Government.

On this point serious objection might be raised as to why the people, if they were dissatisfied with the instruction imparted in these schools, sent their boys to them? Now this circumstance ought not to be considered as evidence of the absence of any kind of dissatisfaction, but rather as a convincing proof of the very wretched state of the country, and the miserable condition of the people. It was in consequence of their straitened circumstances, and not from any willingness on their part, that the people were induced even in

spite of what stung them to the very quick, to send their children to these schools, that they might be enabled to earn a mouthful of bread.

On the establishment of Village Schools, the people were impressed with a belief that they had been founded only with a view to make Christians of their children. The Parganah Visitors and Deputy Inspectors who used to go round the villages, for the purpose of exhorting the people to send their boys to these schools, were known among the villagers by the *sobriquet* of *Kálá Pádrís*, or "black clergymen." Whenever either of these officers made his appearance in a village, the people gave out that the *Kálá Pádrí* had come. Men in general used to consider these as Missionary Schools, founded for the purpose of making them Christians, and those more sensible, though they did not share this belief, nevertheless thought that as the Oordoo language only was taught in them, their children would receive no religious instruction at all, and would consequently embrace Christianity. They believed likewise that it was the intention of Government to abolish the study of the religious sciences, that in future Christianity might be widely disseminated. In most of the districts of the North-Western Provinces, these schools were established *by order* !.

A great deal was talked of about the education of females, and every one felt convinced that the introduction of female education. Government wished that girls should attend schools and receive instruction, and thus leave their privacy. This was extremely distasteful to the Natives : yet in certain districts the thing was actually accomplished. The Parganah Visitors and Deputy Inspectors knew that if they could establish female schools, their exertions would be favorably noticed by the Government, and for this reason they tried to found these institutions both by fair and unfair means. Accordingly the people grew more and more dissatisfied, while they were more and more confirmed in their erroneous belief.

When Colleges were founded in the great towns, the people were very much alarmed. In those days there lived a most renowned Mawlawi, named Shah Abdool-Azíz, and when at the request of the Mohammadans that learned man gave a *Fatwa*, stating his opinion that it was perfectly conformable with the doctrines of the true religion to attend the English Colleges and receive instruction in the English language, hundreds of Mohammadan youths got themselves admitted into them. But the system of education prevailing at that period was a very good one, and not such as now obtains. Various languages, *viz.* Persian and Arabic, Sanskrit and English, were taught, while instruction was given both in Law and Literature. Examinations were held in Mohammadan Law, and *sanads* or diplomas were conferred on the successful students. In no way was the religion of the pupils allowed to be tampered with. Teachers of known ability, good character, and piety were appointed to give instruction. But latterly all this was done away with. The Arabic language fell considerably in estimation, while the study of Law was altogether abolished ; even Persian ceased to be much valued. The system of instruction and the books used also underwent a complete alteration. The teaching of Oordoo and English became the fashion of the day, and consequently the suspicion that Government approved the abolition of the study of the theologic sciences of the people of India, was confirmed. Teachers of ability and character ceased to be employed. The students of those very institutions, who had not yet succeeded in gaining the esteem or good opinion of the people, were appointed Professors, and on this account the Colleges themselves languished.

While therefore the condition of the Colleges and Schools was such as to lead people to believe that they were maintained with the view of disseminating Christianity, a notification was issued by the Government, to the effect that persons educated in these schools, and holding certificates of proficiency in English, and such and such branches of learning, would be preferred to all other candidates for employment in the public offices. Even situations of an inferior character could not be obtained, but on the production of certificates



from the Deputy Inspectors, who are yet considered *Kálá Pádrís*. A deep gloom, as it were, thus overspread the minds of the people, who grew dissatisfied with the Government, and became impressed with the belief that the ruin of their country was being accomplished by every possible means, and that they themselves helpless and hopeless, would be obliged, gradually, to change their religious opinions.

At that very period, orders were issued in certain districts that the prisoners in the Jails should have their food cooked by an appointed person—an arrangement which, though it by no means interfered with the religion of the Mosalmans, had yet the effect of giving great offence to all, and making them believe that Government was prepared to deprive *every* man of his religion, and contemplated attaining this object by *every* means in its power.

Well, while the minds of the people were agitated by these mischievous notions, in 1855, a certain W. E. Edmond, of Calcutta, distributed, all at once, a number of letters addressed generally to the public, but particularly to those holding respectable appointments in the service of the State. The purport of these letters was, that as all India obeyed one Government,—as all parts of the country kept up constant communication one with the other by means of the Electric Telegraph,—and as the Railway system united the different extremes of this great Peninsula, it was necessary that there should be but one religion also, and proper therefore that every one should embrace Christianity. I speak nothing but truth when I state that the receipt of these letters so *terrified* the Natives, that they were as people struck blind, or from under whose feet the ground had suddenly slipped away. All felt convinced that the hour so long anticipated had at last arrived, and that the servants of the Government first, and then the whole population would have to embrace Christianity. No doubt whatever was entertained as to these letters having been forwarded by the orders of Government. People used eagerly to enquire of the Government officials whether they had

received them, thereby meaning to elicit, whether or not, for the sake of employment, they would become Christians. Indeed so great a reproach was attached to the receipt of these letters by Native officials, that whoever received them, was obliged, for fear of their reputation, to conceal the fact, and even to deny having got them. People used to retort saying that they would very shortly come, as surely as they were the servants of Government. The truth is, nothing could have been better calculated to strengthen and confirm the erroneous belief under which the people labored. It fully succeeded, and nothing whatever was done to counteract the evil effects thus produced.

It ought not therefore to have excited surprise if some disturbances had broken out at that period. Fortunately the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal lost no time in taking notice of these circumstances, and he issued a proclamation which had the effect of pacifying the minds of men, and *considerably* allaying the agitation produced. The remedy, however, was not as complete as it might have been; and people thought that the thing was postponed only to be renewed at some more favorable opportunity. [Mr. Edmond's letter and the Lieutenant Governor's proclamation are to be found at the end of this book.]

From all these circumstances the Mohammadans felt more offended than the Hindus. The reason of this is, that the latter perform the ceremonies of their religion more as a mere matter of custom, than as a divine injunction. Generally speaking they are totally ignorant of the fundamental articles of their faith, and those sacred injunctions, upon the due observance of which, according to their religion, depends salvation in a future state. Consequently they are very negligent in religious matters, and not at all well grounded in the doctrines of their religious belief, beyond the observance of certain rites, and abstinances from forbidden food. They do not, like the Mohammadans, feel at all offended, if, in their presence, any thing be said in direct opposition to those religious tenets in which belief is necessary. The latter, on the contrary, fully understand what, according to their religion, is

necessary to salvation, and what entails punishment in the life to come. They look upon the injunctions of their religion, therefore, as orders emanating from God himself, and are consequently firm in their religious belief and more bigotted. They were therefore more dissatisfied, and as was to be expected, actually took a more prominent part in the disturbances than the Hindus. Certainly the interference of Government with any religion is as much opposed to sound policy, as to prevent the imparting of religious instruction (specially when the religion is one to which its votaries are firmly attached) is objectionable and improper. I do not, however, mean that our Government was really such as it was believed to be, but that certainly acts were done, which did not in any way tend to remove the erroneous impressions of the people.

*Cause 2nd.*—The promulgation of such laws and regulations and rules of procedure as were not adapted to a Government like that of India, and which were opposed to the customs of the Natives, or injurious to their interests.

*Secondly.*—The promulgation of objectionable laws and procedures.

Even the Legislative Council had extended its interference to religious matters. Act XXI. of 1850 was directly opposed to customs sanctioned by religion; besides, it gave rise to another erroneous notion, to the effect that it had been passed specially with the view of encouraging conversion to Christianity. It was known that as none professing a different religion could be admitted within the pale of Hindüism, Hindus could of course derive no benefit by it, while with regard to Mohammadans, those converted to Islamism, were prohibited by its provisions from inheriting property left by ancestors who had professed a different faith. As, therefore, no convert to Mohammadanism also could be benefitted by the Act, those only who would embrace Christianity were in a position to enjoy the advantages it held forth. For these reasons people believed that besides interfering with their religion, the Act plainly encouraged conversion to Christianity.

Act XV. of 1856 regarding Hindu widows was likewise directed

against religious customs. It is true that the subject was ably discussed, and *Tiyavasthas* (legal opinions) were taken; but the Hindus, attached more to their customs and usages than their religion, were not only greatly dissatisfied with the Act, but regarded it as a measure intended to bring dishonor and ruin on their families. Moreover it was further erroneously supposed that the law had been passed with a view of placing Hindu widows in a position of independence, such as would enable them to act as they pleased.

The regulation that was in force in the Criminal Courts, regarding the recognition of the free rights of women, seriously affected the honor and reputation of the Natives of India, and was opposed to their customs. Even married women were permitted by the Magistrates' Courts to act quite independently. The legitimate authority which the guardians of women possessed over them, was therefore virtually put an end to. Now all this evidently acted very prejudicially to the interests of religion. The authority that was vested in the Civil Courts to enquire into these matters, was neither sufficient nor productive of any beneficial results; and consequently the investigation of an affair which the religion, customs, and usages of the people required to be immediately enquired into, was involved in so much confusion and delay as to give rise to more serious evils. Very few decrees of the Civil Courts for restoring wives to their husbands were ever put into execution: while in many cases could be found in which a woman had given birth to two or three children at her seducer's home while the complainant was endeavouring to identify the party concerned!

There are in force certain Acts and Regulations according to which cases, in which the parties concerned happen to be of one and the same religion, are decided in a manner quite contrary to the doctrines of the faith they profess. I do not mean that our Government should encourage or prove partial to

The promulgation of certain Acts in cases where the parties are of one religion.